

Pregnancy discrimination

Universities need to ensure policies on pregnant students do not violate Title IX

Last March, Tara Brady filed a lawsuit in federal court against Connecticut's Sacred Heart University for violating Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. A decision in Brady's favor could have important and far-reaching consequences for a group of students whose needs are often overlooked by educational institutes: pregnant women.



JENELLE WILSON

Unfortunately, discrimination against pregnant women still exists in America's education system, despite being expressly prohibited by federal law. Schools, instead of forcing a woman to choose between carrying a pregnancy to term and her education, should be doing everything within their power to ensure pregnant women opportunities to complete school. Universities should not be in the business of enforcing the "M.R.S. degree" stereotype that still haunts women seeking an education.

Brady said in the summer of 2001 while working at a summer basketball camp, she revealed her pregnancy to her basketball coach. After talking to university officials, Brady's coach told her she should leave the school because she would be a "distraction," according to Law.com.

Brady asked her coach to register her as a "medical red-shirt," which would have given her a chance to makeup the time spent not playing basketball due to a disability. She claims this was never done, and her full basketball scholarship, which covered almost all of her expenses, was revoked.

She later learned from a basketball game program that she was listed under redshirt status, but she was not receiving any benefit from the classification.

In May 2002, her scholarship was reinstated by Sacred Heart, as was her status as a member of the school's basketball team. However, she alleges that after her reinstatement, her coach refused to speak with her directly.

She ended up leaving Sacred Heart to enroll at another university.

This case is important because it's one of the first to test a school's obligations to pregnant women under Title IX. Most pregnancy discrimination cases have been decided under Title VII, which prohibits discrimination in employment, but little has been done in education.

According to the Office of Civil Rights in the Department of Education, Title IX, which prohibits discrimination based on sex, requires three things from institutions receiving any amount of federal money.

First, a school cannot treat a woman worse than normal stu-

dents because she is pregnant, meaning a pregnant student cannot be excluded from any program or activity based on her condition. The second requirement is that schools must accommodate pregnancy as though it were a temporary disability, which means that pregnant women are entitled to the same insurance benefits, leave policies or modified course requirements that temporarily disabled students are entitled to.

The last requirement — and this is the big one — is that schools are required to allow a pregnant student to take temporary leave, and when she returns, she must be reinstated to her prior status, regardless of whether the school allows temporary leave for other conditions. The length of a pregnant woman's leave is to be determined by her doctor.

At Texas A&M, if a student misses an entire spring or fall semester — for whatever reason other than an officially sponsored program — they must reapply in order to return. A student does not have to reapply if they withdraw from the University after the census day, or day 12 of classes, but the withdrawal will be on their record.

The University of Texas has a similar policy, according to its re-admission Web site. UT students must be readmitted before they can enroll in classes, even if they missed only one semester and left in good standing.

This is not to say that universities are intentionally discriminating against pregnant women; they simply may not be aware that they're violating Title IX. If that's the case, universities must reevaluate their policies. State and federal lawmakers must also ensure that Title IX is being applied correctly.

Universities that do not have specific policies regarding the leave policies and treatment of pregnant women must correct this. They must develop uniform policies that apply to pregnant students; and the policies must meet the Title IX requirements.

Pregnant women need these policies. Pregnancy, especially toward the end of the term, can be difficult to handle, with doctor appointments, possible complications and the birth itself. It is not fair to force women immediately back into classes after giving birth if they want to remain in school.

It is not fair to make a woman choose between family and educational opportunities.

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IVAN FLORES • THE BATTALION

Protecting Americans

Bush administration policies are putting homeland security at risk

As if lying to the American public about reasons for going to war with Iraq isn't enough, the Bush administration is now misleading people over its efforts to sufficiently protect Americans at home.



JONATHAN STEED

President George W. Bush has requested \$87 billion for military and nation-building operations in Iraq. While Congress must now decide whether to grant this request, many members have a request of their own: that Bush put the money where his mouth is and adequately fund homeland security.

Bush and the Republicans have led the country to believe they are doing all they can to protect Americans against future terrorist attacks. Yet the issue of homeland security, which was once considered to be Bush's strongest re-election issue, might come back to haunt him and others in the administration.

Recent intelligence reports allege that the potential for rocket-propelled grenade attacks against U.S. airlines remains high. In 2002, an Israeli airliner barely missed such an attempt by terrorists in Kenya during a routine takeoff; Israel, however, has special radars on many of its airline planes to detect and repel such grenade assaults. Airline officials here in the states recommend such technology, but admit the cost would be somewhere in the ballpark of \$10 billion to install these radars on the domestic fleet, according to Aviation International News. The Bush administration says this cost is too high, ignoring once again the warning signs posed by the intelligence community.

This is an outrage. While Americans help rebuild the Iraqi infrastructure they destroyed during the war, domestic infrastructure is being neglected pro-

fusely. With most local governments strapped for cash, the United States is seeing firehouse closures, police department layoffs and a dramatic shortage of nurses. These first responders, the people who will be needed the most if another terrorist attack hits American shores, are being denied necessary funds to be fully prepared for any tragedy in the future, according to MSNBC.com.

This neglect toward basic homeland security needs represents the misplaced financial priorities of the president and his administration.

The president has valued tax cuts for his country club friends over increased airline security. He has chosen to build new firehouses in Iraq while allowing firehouses to be shut down at home. Bush has diverted America's attention toward Saddam Hussein, a man not responsible for the 9-11 attacks on American soil, while failing to bring Osama Bin Laden to justice for his crimes. Now al-Qaida is

“With most local governments strapped for cash, the United States is seeing firehouse closure, police department layoffs and a dramatic shortage of nurses.”

regrouping, American soldiers are open targets in Iraq and the president still refuses to provide required resources to help make the nation safer and more secure.

Perhaps the American public will one day wake up and realize what is really going on in the United States. Once the glitzy photo ops and fresh tax rebates fade from memory, the harsh reality of this new era in world history will set in. Americans watch on TV almost daily continued terrorist attacks taking place around the globe, from the resorts of Indonesia to the streets of Jerusalem. Some experts believe similar attacks are being plotted against the United States. But if Bush doesn't provide the necessary funding and place a new emphasis on homeland security, Americans may not be prepared to deal with the disaster that could follow.

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Demanding too much

Salary disputes leading to excessively high, undeserved paychecks for actors

Actors are revered as smart, funny and, on the whole, entertaining. They are paid quite well to take the average person's mind away from the stresses of everyday life for a few hours. How much stress relief is worth starting to come into play more and more often, with many actors demanding more money for their humor and expertise.



LAUREN ESPOSITO

While people enjoy watching television and going to the movies, the amount that actors are paid is becoming excessive. There is no justification for being paid \$20 million for working on a film for three months, while, most of the time, living in an exotic location.

People's talent is not worth that kind of money.

There is a huge amount of talent in the arts business that could complete a film for \$500,000 and perform just as well as the person making \$20 million for the same film.

The U.S. Department of Labor reports that the average income for an actor in the year 2000 was \$25,920, with the highest 10 percent earning more than \$93,000 and the lowest 10 percent earning less than \$13,000. There is a surplus of people to take over positions when big-name actors demand too much; they just need the chance to prove themselves.

Actors are demanding more money now because they can. The consumer is willing to keep watching them, so the producer is willing to increase the pay to keep the actor in his production and maintain network ratings, which, in turn, earns money.

In the end, the consumer is the one who ultimately decides how much each actor is worth. The consumer watches the shows, purchases the tapes and sees the movies. The market as a whole needs to take a step back and put the actors in their places.

According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census, the average household income in the United States in the year 2001 was \$42,000 to \$43,000. Now, how much did Jennifer Aniston make last week filming "Friends?"

For most people, the amount of money a

significantly famous actor makes in one week of work can greatly outweigh the amount a middle-class family makes in a year. An actor can make more in a day than the \$12,000 family of two at the poverty line makes in an entire year.

The most recent example of an actor's "strife" was the squabble between Brad Garrett and CBS about how much money he was going to be paid for the upcoming season of "Everybody Loves Raymond." To prove a point and to show the producers that he was serious about a pay increase, he boycotted the show's rehearsals and said he would not return until his salary was increased.

While the writers did edit his character out of the first episode, they later presented a new salary to Garrett, which he accepted.

How someone could actually protest his salary in the manner that Garrett did is inconceivable, unless his annual pay for a full-time job is less than the nationally set poverty level. But Garrett was protesting because of a \$150,000-per-episode salary, an amount he claimed was too low.

Because of his protesting and the demand for the show, Garrett ended up with a raise that almost doubled his paycheck. He now makes almost \$300,000 an episode, which comes out to about \$7.2 million for the year.

When the majority of working-age people wake up in the morning, they get dressed and head off to their jobs. The amount that each makes is different, but each person is always hoping to make enough to keep his families fed and housed for a lifetime. For the average person to get a raise takes time and effort, not just a temper tantrum.

Yes, the arts industry is needed, and is much enjoyed, but the demands of some actors are getting out of hand. Everyone can be replaced, no matter how talented they are. This is how the industry has survived for centuries. Talented people have come and gone, and most have not made the kind of money that actors are demanding today.

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